

# Natural Environments

## READ TO DISCOVER

1. What landforms and rivers are found in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus?
2. What factors influence the region's climates and vegetation?
3. What natural resources does the region have?

## WHY IT MATTERS

Russia has large coal deposits, but burning coal causes air pollution. Use [cnnfyi.com](http://cnnfyi.com) or other **current events** sources to learn about industries that use coal and efforts to clean up the pollution they cause.

## IDENTIFY

Eurasia

## DEFINE

icebreakers

taiga

## LOCATE

Baltic Sea

Black Sea

Ural Mountains

## Locate, continued

Caucasus Mountains

Caspian Sea

Northern European Plain

Crimean Peninsula

Volga River

West Siberian Plain

Central Siberian Plateau

Kamchatka Peninsula

Lake Baikal

Murmansk

Sakhalin Island



## Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus: Physical-Political







## Landforms and Rivers

Together Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus cover about 12 percent of the world's land area. Russia alone extends more than 6,000 miles (9,600 km) from east to west. The huge country stretches across **Eurasia** from the Baltic Sea and Black Sea to the Pacific Ocean. *Eurasia* is the name given to Europe and Asia when they are considered one landmass or continent. Russia is the world's largest country in area. No other country shares borders with more countries. Much of northern Russia lies above the Arctic Circle.

The Ural Mountains divide the region. Areas west of the Urals—including Ukraine and Belarus—are part of Europe. Those to the east lie in Asia. The part of Russia that is east of the Urals is known as Siberia. The region's remaining three countries—Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia—are in the Caucasus Mountains. These high mountains lie between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. The highest point in Europe is on Russia's southern border with Georgia in the Caucasus Mountains. There Mount Elbrus soars to 18,510 feet (5,642 m). An active tectonic zone, the Caucasus region suffers from severe earthquakes.

Ice-age glaciers and long-term erosion shaped the broad plains that are the region's major landforms. Much of the European area shares the Northern European Plain with countries farther west. Thus, the European areas have low elevations. In fact, Belarus has no point over 1,135 feet (346 m) above sea level. Southern Belarus and northwestern Ukraine contain the Pripet Marshes. These marshes make up the largest swamp in Europe. Ukraine's highest point is located where the Carpathian Mountains cross the country's western borders. Peaks on the Crimean Peninsula in southeastern Ukraine, a popular tourist area, are slightly lower.

Russia's Ural Mountains are more like high rolling hills. For this reason, road and rail crossings there need no major tunnels. West of the Urals, the gently rolling terrain of the Volga River basin dominates the heart of Russia. East of the Urals is the thinly populated West Siberian Plain. The Ob River

*Plains like the Ukrainian farmland pictured here spread for vast distances across Eurasia.*



creates a huge swamp area there. In the Russian Far East, beyond the Central Siberian Plateau, are high snowy ranges. Among these are the active volcanoes of the Kamchatka (kuhm-CHAH-kuh) Peninsula.

The Dnieper, Don, and Volga are three of the largest south-flowing rivers in the region. These important shipping channels also supply water for hydroelectric projects and cities. The major Siberian rivers, such as the Ob, Yenisey, and Lena, flow northward to the Arctic Ocean from mountains in the south. One of the Yenisey's tributaries, the Angara River, flows through southern Siberia from Lake Baikal. Sometimes called the Jewel of Siberia for its beauty, Lake Baikal is the deepest lake in the world. It holds about one fifth of the world's freshwater!

**READING CHECK:** **Physical Systems** What factors shaped the region's main landform type?

## Climates and Vegetation

Russians sometimes joke that winter lasts for 12 months and then summer begins. As you can see on a map, much of the region is in the same latitudes as northern Canada and Alaska. The weather can be harsh. However, the region offers a wealth of resources to those who can brave the elements.

**Climates** Much of the country lies in the humid continental, subarctic, and tundra climate regions. During the year's five coldest months, rivers and canals throughout the region freeze. In these cold climates a polluted icy fog often hangs over cities during winter. Created by fumes and smoke from cities, this fog is trapped over the cities by the cold air. In the region's northern areas permafrost is widespread and deep. When the permafrost's surface layer melts in summer, buildings tilt, highways buckle, and railroad tracks slip sideways.

Harsh conditions prevail in the area's eastern two thirds. Any ocean winds that might bring moisture and moderate temperatures cannot reach far inland. As a result, parts of the interior are very dry. Siberia's severe winters often bring temperatures below  $-40^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$ ). At one of the coldest places outside of Antarctica, Verkhoyansk in Siberia, the thermometer has reached  $-90^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-68^{\circ}\text{C}$ ).

The region's European third has the mildest climates. In addition, the soils there are better for agriculture and human settlement. Moisture from the Atlantic Ocean far to the west brings winter snow and summer rain. In the Russian Far East, coastal areas receive rain-bearing winds from the Pacific Ocean.

The cold climate and small amount of warm coastline reduce Russia's access to the sea. The Arctic Ocean can freeze all



Few creatures can live more than about 400 feet (120 m) below the Black Sea's surface. Too little oxygen and too much hydrogen sulfide create an environment that is poisonous to most life forms, including most bacteria.

*Although in much of Siberia snowfall is relatively light, the cold temperatures ensure that the snow stays on the ground for months. The village of Ust'-Anzas, in southern Siberia, lies under a blanket of snow. The sign on the building tells travelers that inside they can buy tickets on Aeroflot, Russia's national airline.*





the way south to Russia's northern shores. Ship and barge traffic there requires using **icebreakers**. These are ships that can break up ice in frozen waterways. However, warm waters of the North Atlantic Drift reach around northern Norway to northwestern Russia. There you will find Murmansk, Russia's only large ice-free Arctic port.

**Vegetation** Differences in climate cause plant life to vary from north to south. Tundra vegetation grows along the northern coast. Low shrubs, mosses, and wildflowers are common there.

To the south is the **taiga**, a forest of mainly evergreen trees that covers half of Russia. Fir, larch, pine, and spruce are common. Farming is limited there because of the short growing season, acidic soils, and permafrost.

Farther south, in Belarus and in European Russia, you will find mixed deciduous-coniferous forest. This type of forest also grows along the coast of the Sea of Japan in the Russian Far East.

Still farther south is the drier grassland known as the steppe. Rich soil called *chernozem* (Russian for "black earth") has built up on the steppe. The grassland, long used for grazing, was plowed under by the 1800s. It has become one of the world's major grain-producing areas. In the past, people of the steppe fleeing invaders found safety in the taiga farther north. These landscapes are often featured in Russian literature.

#### INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

*The taiga forms a wide band across northern Russia from its western borders to its Pacific coast far to the east. It provides a wealth of forest resources. How is taiga vegetation different from forests farther south?*

✓ **READING CHECK:** **Places and Regions** Which vegetation area allows grain production on a large scale and why?



## Natural Resources

Russia's forest, energy, and mineral resources are among the richest in the world. Yet much of this wealth was wasted because the government pushed production over conservation. Some of the remaining resources are in remote areas or are of low quality.

The taiga provides wood for building products and paper pulp. Steady logging west of the Ural Mountains has cleared many areas. However, in Siberia the taiga can provide forest resources for a long time to come. Eastern Siberia also has gold and diamond mines.

Coal, hydroelectricity, natural gas, and oil are the region's main energy resources. Huge oil reserves in the Caspian Sea area are being tapped by all the countries around the sea. Oil and gas fields between the Volga River and the Ural Mountains have been crucial to the region's development. They helped the Volga River basin become Russia's industrial heartland. Large reserves east of the Urals in the Ob River basin now supply





most of Russia's oil and gas. The world's largest network of pipelines carries fuel from that area to Moscow, St. Petersburg, and for export to Europe. Sakhalin (sah-kah-LEEN) Island and the Kamchatka Peninsula also have energy resources. Russia's first geothermal power station is in Kamchatka. Geothermal water is put to other uses too, such as heating greenhouses and fish farms.

Russia and Ukraine have many large coal mines. Those coal reserves could last for centuries. The region is also rich in metals, such as copper, gold, iron ore, manganese, nickel, and platinum.

**READING CHECK:** *Environment and Society* Why is it hard for Russia to profit from some of its natural resources?

#### INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

Limited access to the ocean restricts the region's fishing industry. Here fishers net sturgeon for their eggs where the Volga River flows into the Caspian Sea. Served fresh as caviar, the sturgeon's eggs are an expensive delicacy. Sturgeon are now threatened with extinction. **How might the Caspian Sea's location affect the price of caviar?**

## Section 1

# Review

**Identify** Eurasia

**Define** icebreakers, taiga

**Working with Sketch Maps** On a map of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and the Caucasus that you draw or that your teacher provides, label the Baltic Sea, Black Sea, Ural Mountains, Caucasus Mountains, Caspian Sea, Northern European Plain, Crimean Peninsula, Volga River, West Siberian Plain, Central Siberian Plateau, Kamchatka Peninsula, Lake Baikal, and Sakhalin Island. In the margin, identify Russia's only ice-free port.

### Reading for the Main Idea

- Physical Systems** Why are earthquakes common in the Caucasus Mountains?
- Environment and Society** What are three of the European region's major south-flowing rivers? What are three functions that they serve?
- Places and Regions** Why is western Russia wetter than most of Siberia?

### Critical Thinking

- Environment and Society** Why might developing Siberia's resources be difficult?

**go.hrw.com** Homework Practice Online  
Keyword: SW3 HP17

### Organizing What You Know

- Create a chart like the one shown below. Use it to describe the tundra, taiga, and steppe regions. Refer to this unit's climate and precipitation maps for more information.

	Climate	Soil conditions	Vegetation
Tundra			
Taiga			
Steppe			



# History and Culture

## READ TO DISCOVER

1. What are some major events in the growth of the Russian Empire?
2. How did the Soviet Union develop, and what was life like for its citizens?
3. What are some features of the region's culture?

## WHY IT MATTERS

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, tensions between ethnic Russians and other groups have grown. Use [cnnfyi.com](http://cnnfyi.com) or other **current events** sources to learn about ethnic conflict in Russia.

## IDENTIFY

Slavs	Cossacks
Rus	Bolsheviks

## DEFINE

czar	autarky
serfs	gulag
abdicate	shatter belt
soviets	

## LOCATE

Kiev	St. Petersburg
Moscow	Amur River
Sea of Okhotsk	Minsk

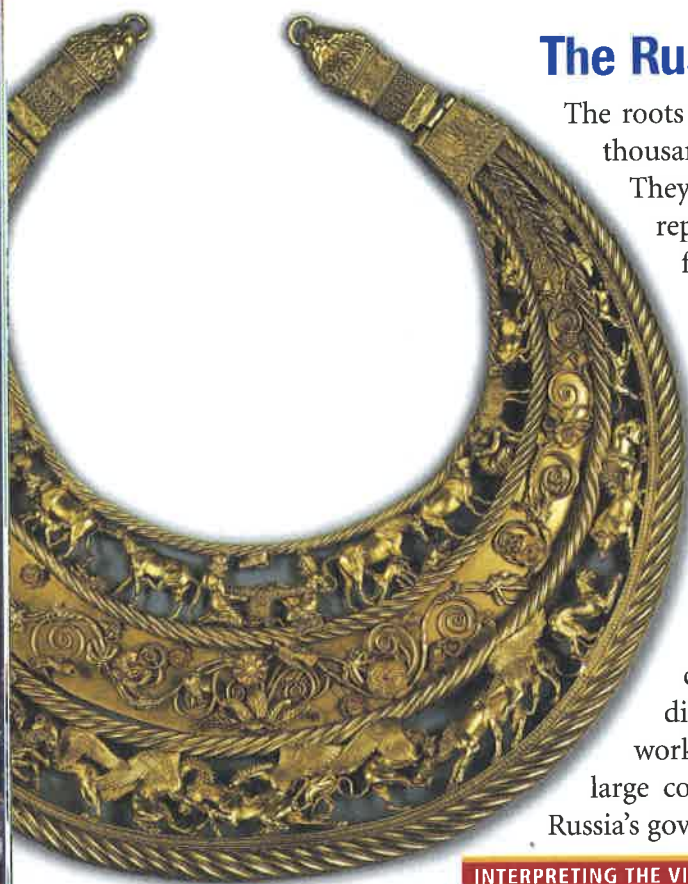
## The Russian Empire

The roots of the Russian Empire lie in the grassy plains of the south. For thousands of years, people moved across the steppe, usually east to west. They came from what are now Mongolia, China, and the Central Asian republics. Bringing their herds with them, these peoples were fleeing droughts and wars. Each wave of newcomers brought new ways of life to the region. The main people to settle in what is now Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus were the **Slavs**.

In the A.D. 800s the city of Kiev became an important center for trade between the Mediterranean and Baltic Sea. Among Kiev's early leaders were Scandinavian traders called **Rus** (ROOS). The name *Russia* comes from this word, which referred to Slavic peoples in the region.

Merchants also traveled into the forests farther north. At the same time these merchants founded new towns. Some of the towns that were located on high banks where rivers joined grew into cities. Moscow is an example. A prince ordered workers to dig ditches and build dirt walls on the site of an older settlement. The workers topped the dirt walls with a wooden wall. This fort became a large compound called the Kremlin. Its walls would eventually surround Russia's government buildings, churches, and palaces.

**INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD** This intricately detailed gold necklace was made by the Scythians, one of the early peoples who moved across the Eurasian steppe. They flourished from the 700s to the 300s B.C. The Scythians were known for their skill in warfare and on horseback. **Why do you think metalworking and jewelry making were valued art forms for a people such as the Scythians?**





Over time Christianity increasingly influenced the region. By the 1100s Eastern, or Orthodox, Christianity had become the main religion of Kiev. In 1240, Mongol invaders from Central Asia destroyed Kiev. They made the region the western outpost of their growing empire. For the common people, though, life went on much as it had before.

**Conquest and Expansion** While the Mongols remained in power, several states emerged. The strongest was Muscovy, north of Kiev. Its chief city was Moscow. In the late 1400s Ivan III, the prince of Moscow, won control over parts of Russia from the Mongols.

In 1547 Ivan IV, who became known as Ivan the Terrible, crowned himself **czar** (ZAHHR) of all Russia. The word *czar*, or *tsar*, comes from the Latin word *caesar* and means “emperor.” Under Ivan IV the Russian Empire stretched from north of Kiev to the Arctic Ocean and east to the Urals.

Gradually Russian fur trappers, hunters, and pioneers migrated eastward into Siberia. By 1637, explorers reached the Pacific coast at the Sea of Okhotsk (uh-KAWTSK). **Cossacks**, a hardy people from the southern steppe frontiers, played an important role in the eastward expansion.

Russia gained some European territory under Czar Peter the Great, who ruled from 1682 to 1725. He took over lands along the Baltic Sea. He also expanded Russian control in what are now Belarus and Ukraine. Peter had St. Petersburg built for his capital. (See Cities & Settlements: St. Petersburg.) Catherine the Great ruled Russia during the late 1700s. She took the northern side of the Black Sea and encouraged settlers to move to the Volga region. This expansion brought many non-Russian peoples within the Russian Empire.

In the 1800s Russians spread into the Caucasus and Central Asia. Much of the population there was Muslim. For a brief time, Russia controlled what is now Alaska. There was even a Russian fort and farming settlement in California. By 1860 Russia had taken much of the Amur (ah-MOOR) River region that had been claimed by China. After Russia lost a war with Japan (1904–05), the country retreated to its current borders with China and North Korea.

**End of an Empire** Russia started to industrialize by the late 1800s, but it remained largely a country of poor peasant farmers. These farmers, called **serfs**, worked for a lord. Serfs were bound to the land, which means they could not leave the lord’s land permanently without his permission. The serfs were freed in the 1860s, but rural poverty did not end. Soon life got worse for many Russians. Poor harvests led to food shortages. There was also an economic depression. By the start of World War I in 1914, the foundations of Russian society were on shaky ground. Russia suffered huge losses in the war, and social and economic problems worsened. Finally, the czar was forced to **abdicate**, or resign, in early 1917. A republic was set up but had little success. In the fall of 1917, a small group called the **Bolsheviks** overthrew the government, an event known as the Russian Revolution. The czar and his family were killed.

**READING CHECK:** *The Uses of Geography* What are some factors that led to the fall of the czar?



*In Russian, Ivan IV was called Grozny, which means “Awe Inspiring.” He was indeed terrible at times, as he brutally suppressed the noble class—or boyars—and lashed out at enemies. Yet during Ivan’s reign, the empire expanded, and printing was introduced to Russia.*

#### INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

*Vladimir Lenin gives a speech during the Communist Revolution. Lenin believed in what he called “the dictatorship of the proletariat.” Proletariat means “working class.” How would Lenin’s plan for government contrast with what you have already learned about dictators or dictatorships?*







*These workers at a collective farm share a meal. Collective farms, or kolkhozy in Russian, were made up of many small holdings grouped into a single unit for joint operation under government supervision. Peasants were forced to join kolkhozy.*



#### INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

*A child and her mother walk across Red Square in Moscow. What clues in the photograph may indicate that regional trade patterns have changed since the Soviet era?*

## The Soviet Union

The Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, wanted to remake Russia using the ideas of German philosopher Karl Marx. Marx thought that the people of the working classes were victims of capitalism. Like Marx, Lenin thought the solution was communism. Under communism, the workers were to elect governing local bodies called **soviets** to pass laws and make decisions. The Russian Empire was renamed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), also known as the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union eventually included 15 republics, each based largely on ethnic territories.

**Life in the Soviet Union** The Soviet Union soon became a one-party, totalitarian state led at first by Lenin. After Lenin's death in 1924, Joseph Stalin took power. Stalin's brutal rule lasted until 1953. Both Lenin and Stalin tried to promote a single Soviet culture. They had names of cities and streets changed to honor communism's heroes. In addition, because it was the language of the political leadership, Russian spread to non-Russian ethnic groups.

Soviet economic planners set up a command economy. They also followed a policy of **autarky** (AW-tahr-kee). Under this system a country tries to produce all the goods that it needs. Trade with capitalist nations was very limited. Without competition, however, efficiency and product quality often fell. Production of consumer goods and services lagged far behind that of the United States and Western Europe.

The government ran large state farms, but agriculture faced constant problems. Food production was often low on the state farms. Millions of peasants died of starvation or in prison during the forced change to the new farming methods. Small private plots, which families worked in their spare time, produced about one fourth of the country's food.

Personal freedoms were strictly limited. People who disagreed with Communist leaders could be jailed. Under Stalin, millions were sent to terrible labor camps. Many of those camps were in the far north, both east and west of the Urals. This network of labor camps was called the **gulag**. Soviet leaders also tried to stop religious worship. They believed that religion would lessen people's loyalty to the state. Many Christian, Jewish, and Muslim houses of worship were closed or destroyed.

Yet the Soviet government did have some successes in education and health care. For example, by the 1980s some 90 percent of the people could read and write. Many people, including women, became doctors. In fact, basic health care was free and widely available. Most able workers had jobs.

**A New Beginning** Finally, the government allowed some economic and political changes in the 1980s. However, the Soviet Union began to fall apart in 1990 and collapsed at the end of 1991. Each of the 15 former Soviet republics became independent. The new countries kept the same boundaries as the old republics even when they divided ethnic groups.

Life changed quickly for the people of the former Soviet Union. Today citizens can finally choose among candidates in elections. News from around the



world now flows more freely. Religious freedoms have also expanded. In addition, communism is being replaced by capitalism. Shoppers can buy new consumer products. American fast food companies have opened restaurants there. In the new market economies, many businesses that had been owned by the government are in private hands. In many ways, however, the rapid change has caused severe hardships. You will read more about these problems in Section 3.

**READING CHECK: Human Systems** What are some ways that life has changed since the Soviet Union collapsed?

## Culture

Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus share a strong sense of cultural identity. There are many similarities in language, religion, and customs. However, there is great cultural diversity within Russia. In fact, Russia has at least 60 different ethnic groups.

**People and Languages** Language is an important source of national identity in the region. At least 85 percent of Russians are Slavs and speak Slavic languages. The region's Slavic languages are written in the Cyrillic alphabet, which was developed from an ancient Greek script. More than 95 percent of Ukrainians and about 98 percent of Belarusians are also Slavic. In fact, the great majority of Eurasia's more than 300 million Slavs live in these three countries.

As the Russian Empire grew, it pulled in many non-Slavic peoples. During the Soviet era, the lands where these non-Slavic peoples lived became special republics within the country. Russia has 21 of these republics today. Members of non-Slavic groups there speak different languages. Many books have been published in these languages. However, in most of the republics, Russian speakers are in the majority. In some of the republics, the non-Slavic languages are disappearing.



### FOCUS ON HISTORY

**The Peoples of the Caucasus Republics** Some of Russia's ethnic republics are located in the Caucasus region in the south. Also in the Caucasus are the former Soviet republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Those three republics are independent countries today. The ethnic republics and countries in the Caucasus lie in a band of land that separates the Black and Caspian Seas. This area is made up of the high rugged Caucasus Mountains. The region's different ethnic groups developed within the hundreds of small isolated valleys in this mountain range.

The Caucasus is also what geographers call a **shatter belt**. It is a zone of frequent boundary changes and conflicts. Often shatter belts are located between major powers. Throughout history, peoples from the south—Turks, Persians, Arabs—and the north—Russians, Mongols, Tatars—have fought over the Caucasus. Ethnic tensions still trouble the region.



Among the peoples experiencing change are the Khanty of the Ob River basin. They are trying to protect their land from damage done by the oil industry.



### Republics of the Russian Federation and Ethnic Composition

Republic	Ethnic Composition
Adygea	Russian
Alania	Ossetian
Bashkortostan	Russian
Buryatia	Russian
Chechnya	Chechen
Chuvashia	Chuvash
Dagestan	Avar
Gorno-Altay	Russian
Ingushetia	Ingush
Kabardino-Balkaria	Kabard
Kalmykia	Kalmyk
Karachay-Cherkessia	Russian
Karelia	Russian
Khakassia	Russian
Komi	Russian
Mari El	Russian
Mordvinia	Russian
Sakha	Russian
Tatarstan	Tatar
Tyva	Tyva
Udmurtia	Russian

Source: Centre for Russian Studies

#### INTERPRETING THE CHART

The chart lists the ethnic group that makes up the majority in each of the republics of the Russian Federation. Note that the Russian Federation is the country's formal name.





Georgia reached a golden age during the reign (1184–1212) of Queen Tamara. When she rallied her troops before going into battle, the soldiers cheered their “king” Tamara. At the time, there was no word for *queen* in the Georgian language.

The region’s physical geography and history have shaped its cultural geography. For example, many different languages are spoken in the Caucasus today. The three main languages are very different from each other. In Azerbaijan a Turkic dialect is most common. Except for some words borrowed from Persian, Armenian seems to be unrelated to any other living language. Georgian is one of few members of the South Caucasian language family. Some people believe the language might be related to northern Spain’s Basque tongue, the origins of which are mysterious.

Religions here are as diverse as languages. The Armenian Christian Church is very old. A majority of Georgians belong to an Eastern Orthodox Church that is independent from the Russian Orthodox Church. Most Azerbaijanis and some people in Russia’s southern republics, like Chechnya, are Muslim. Near the northeast edge of the Caucasus are Mongolian Kalmyks, whose faith is similar to Tibetan Buddhism.

**READING CHECK:** *Environment and Society* How have the physical geography and history of the Caucasus affected the region’s cultural diversity?

**Settlement** Just 25 percent of Russia lies in Europe. However, 80 percent of its population lives there. Russians east of the Urals are concentrated in a southern corridor of transportation routes, warmer weather, and steppe environments.

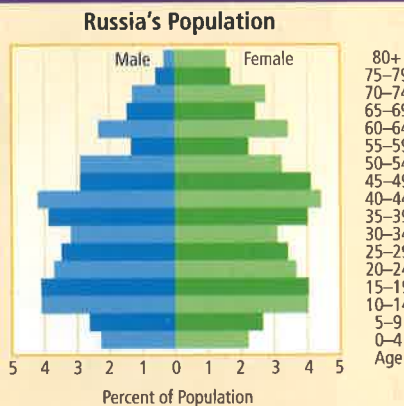
Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus all have many large cities. More than two thirds of the population lives in cities. More than 9 million people live in and around Moscow, the region’s most populous urban area. More than 5 million live in St. Petersburg to the northwest. Kiev, Ukraine’s capital, and Minsk, the capital of Belarus, are also among Europe’s larger cities.

All three countries are losing population. Many people have emigrated. Also, the death rate is higher than the birthrate. Poor health-related behaviors, including heavy smoking and alcohol abuse, are some key reasons for this trend. In addition, the collapse of the Soviet Union plunged many people into poverty. The old health care system also fell apart, cutting people off from medical care. No other part of the world has seen such population losses.

**Religion and Education** Even after years of Communist rule, almost every city and village in the region has a prominent Christian church. The main religion is Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Church architecture often features an onion-shaped dome. Only the parts of Belarus and Ukraine bordering Roman Catholic Poland and Slovakia have many Catholic churches. Protestant churches are rare but increasing due to recent missionary activity. Also increasing is the number of Islamic mosques in the larger cities and in the Volga and Caucasus areas. Muslim minorities are common there.

Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus have inherited from the Soviet Union an emphasis on education and on scientific and technical training. They stress not just engineering but also the arts, humanities, and foreign languages. The best schools are in the national capitals of Kiev, Minsk, and Moscow.

### Population Pyramid, 2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Database

**INTERPRETING THE GRAPH** From what you know about European and Russian history, what events might account for the larger female populations in the older age ranges? How can you tell that Russia’s population is declining?



**Food, Traditions, and Customs** Food reveals the influences of cold climates. Over much of the north, hardy grains grown are barley, oats, rye, and wheat. Dark rye bread and barley soup are common foods. Small buckwheat pancakes called blini are served with sour cream. Cold-weather vegetables like beets, cabbage, and potatoes go into borscht. Borscht is a traditional soup that sometimes has meat.

Belarusians, Russians, and Ukrainians often drink tea. This preference comes from centuries of ties to tea-growing areas nearby in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Fruit juices and spices are often added.

Environmental differences between the forested north and the open steppes of the south are seen in rural architecture. The people of the forested north used wood to fashion their cottages, churches, and other buildings. Elaborate wood carving decorates the front of homes and other buildings. On the steppe, where there is much less wood, people often built sod homes. Roofs and walls were blocks of grassy turf. Sometimes people dug the buildings partly into the ground. This helped keep buildings cooler in summer and warmer in winter. However, today most city people of all regions live in large apartment houses.

Outside of the big cities are country cottages, called dachas (DAH-chuhs). Members of the urban middle class spend weekends and holidays in these homes. Keeping a dacha was also a way to escape being spied upon during the Soviet era.



*Dachas range from mere sheds to quaint cottages, like this one, and ornate palaces. They offer relaxation, relief from city pollution, and a place to raise vegetables. Much of Russia's food is grown on dacha land.*

**READING CHECK:** **Human Systems** What are some traditions that have survived changes in government?

## Section 2

## Review

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**Homework  
Practice  
Online**  
Keyword: SW3 HP17

### Identify

Slavs, Rus, Cossacks, Bolsheviks

**Define** czar, serfs, abdicate, soviets, autarky, gulag, shatter belt

### Working with Sketch Maps

On the map you created in Section 1, label Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kiev, Moscow, Sea of Okhotsk, St. Petersburg, Amur River, and Minsk. In the margin of your map, name the two U.S. states where Russia held land during the 1800s.

### Reading for the Main Idea

- The World in Spatial Terms** What lands were added to the Russian Empire under Ivan IV, Peter the Great, and Catherine the Great?
- Human Systems** What subjects do the region's educational systems emphasize? What other subjects do students learn?

### Critical Thinking

- Analyzing** Why does Russia have many non-Slavic peoples? What factors account for the cultural diversity of the Caucasus?
- Making Generalizations and Predictions** Using data and graphics from the chapter and the unit population map, describe the population characteristics of modern Russia. Do you think Russia's population will grow or decline in the near future? Why?

### Organizing What You Know

- Create a graphic organizer like the one shown below. Use it to provide information about the major religions of the region.

Eastern Orthodoxy	Roman Catholicism	Protestantism	Islam



# The Region Today

## READ TO DISCOVER

1. How have the economies of areas within the region developed?
2. What challenges does the region face?

## WHY IT MATTERS

Any major economic and political changes in the world's largest country are of worldwide interest. Use [cnnfyi.com](http://cnnfyi.com) or other **current events** sources to learn about the latest developments in Russia.

## DEFINE

light industry  
heavy industry  
smelters

## LOCATE

Vladivostok  
Khabarovsk

Kuril Islands  
Chernobyl

## Economic Development

Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine are changing their economies to compete in new markets. The countries are working to develop **light industry**. Light industry focuses on the production of consumer goods, such as clothing or housewares. **Heavy industry**, which usually involves manufacturing based on metals, is becoming less important. Cities are becoming more like those in richer countries. New shopping centers, stores, and sidewalk stalls are opening. Paint and better maintenance brighten old apartment houses. Single-family houses, even some luxury homes, are being built.

**The Moscow Region** Moscow, with its huge Kremlin, has symbolized Russia for centuries. The city became the home of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 1300s and Russia's capital in the 1400s. Most Russians have looked to Moscow as their country's heart and soul. This was true even while St. Petersburg was the capital from 1712 to 1918.

Today greater Moscow is Russia's most important economic region. It is the national center of communications, culture, education, finance, politics, and transportation. More than 70 institutions of higher learning are there. As a result, Moscow's economic advantages are many. Roads, rails, and air routes link the capital to all points in Russia. The city's location also gives its businesses access to raw materials and labor.

The economic region around Moscow stretches for many miles in all directions. Millions of Russians live and work within the area's network of transportation routes and job sites. Among the transportation links is the world's busiest subway. The area also has electrified railroads and a major beltway.

## INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

*Two women relax near their salon at GUM, a Moscow shopping mall of more than 150 stores that receives some 300,000 visitors per day. GUM stands for Gosudarstvenny Universalny Magazine, or "State Department Store." How does GUM compare to your community's shopping centers?*







*Ballet dancers perform Pyotr Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake at the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg. Tchaikovsky was one of Russia's many great composers.*

**The St. Petersburg Region** Moscow reflects Russia's old values and traditions. In contrast, St. Petersburg represents the country's desire for Western ideas and practices. Located on the Gulf of Finland, it has been called the Venice of the North for its many canals. St. Petersburg has good transportation facilities. The city's location also eases trade and transportation links with other European cities. Major products include chemicals, machinery, ships, and textiles. Many cultural attractions and universities draw tourists and high-tech industries.

**The Volga and Urals Regions** Heavy industry lines Russia's Volga River and the Ural Mountains. Hydroelectricity is abundant there. Dams that produce power have also turned the Volga into a chain of lakes. Refineries and petrochemical plants process oil and gas. Russia's largest car and truck factories are in the area.

Nearly every important mineral except coal and oil has been discovered in the Urals. These resources laid the base for industrial development. Copper and iron **smelters**, factories that process metal ores, are still important.

**Siberia** For centuries, Russians saw Siberia as a frontier treasure chest of furs, gold, and lumber. However, opening this cold harsh region has been difficult. Now Siberian settlement, farming, and industry mostly follow the Trans-Siberian Railroad. The building of the railway started in 1891. It eventually connected Moscow to Vladivostok (vla-duh-vuh-STAHK) on the Sea of Japan. At about 5,800 miles (9,330 km), it is the longest single rail line in the world. Workers completed a more direct railway, called the Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM), across eastern Siberia in 1989. Permafrost and other difficult conditions made building these lines a great feat.

Lumbering, mining, and oil production are Siberia's most important industries. Because wages are higher in Siberia, some Russians move there to work. Still, large areas of Siberia have few people or none at all.

#### INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

*Workers lay a pipeline that will transport natural gas westward from Siberia. How do you think these workers adapt to Siberia's environment in order to do their jobs?*





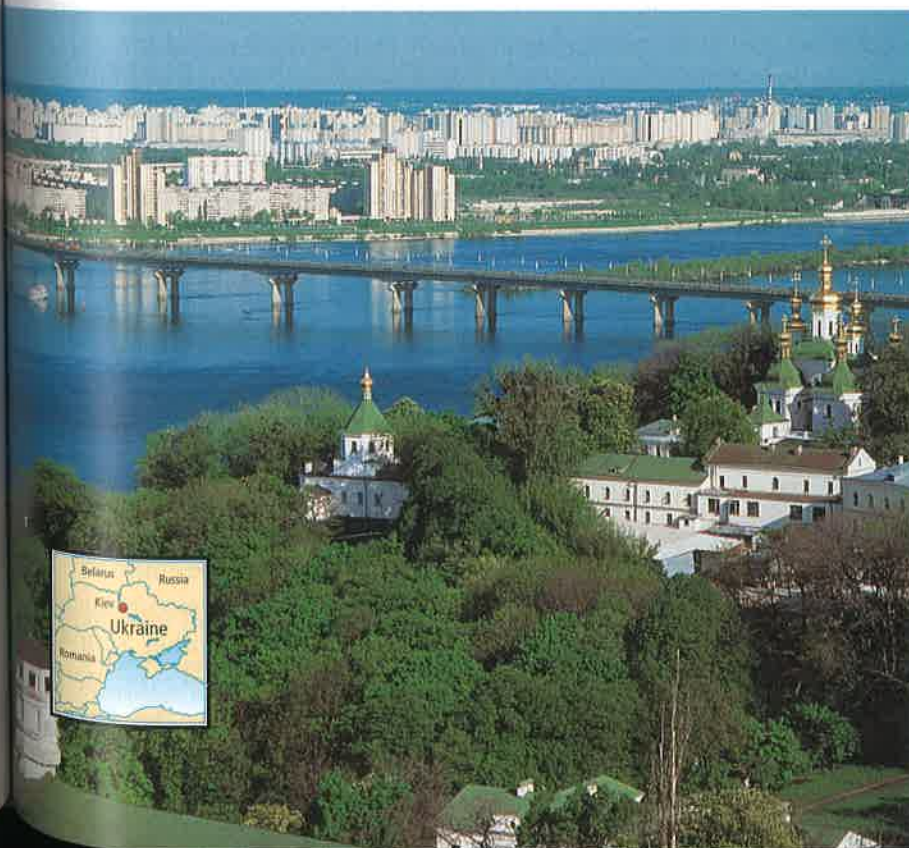
**The Russian Far East** Russia has a long coastline on the Pacific Ocean. There, in the Russian Far East, much land remains heavily forested. Summer weather is mild enough for farming in the Amur River valley. Khabarovsk (kuh-BAHR-uhfsk), the main inland city, has factories that process forest and mineral resources. Vladivostok is a naval base and the chief seaport and fishing center.

Sakhalin Island, with its oil and mineral resources, lies off the eastern coast of Siberia in the Sea of Okhotsk. The Kuril (KYOOHR-eel) Islands, which are important for commercial fishing, are farther east. Russia took the islands from Japan at the end of World War II. Japan claims that four of them should be returned. If the two countries settle the issue, Japan may invest more in the Russian Far East and Siberia.

**Ukraine and Kiev** Kiev is Ukraine's capital. Sheltered by high bluffs in the Dnieper River valley, it is an attractive city. About 10 percent of Ukraine's population lives there. The city also has a large share of the country's economic activity. Like Moscow, Kiev is centrally located in a region rich with agricultural, energy, industrial, and human resources. Kiev's winning soccer team, Dynamo, is an important symbol for the city.

Wheat, sunflowers (for cooking oil), and sugar beets are common crops in Ukraine. The country exports a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and animal products. Ukraine's heavy industry is based on coal, iron, manganese, and other metals. These resources led to concentration of metalworking in the Donets Basin and along the Dnieper River. Ukraine's moderate climate, access to expanding markets, and resources may help it attract new investment over time.

**INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD** *Kiev is one of the oldest cities in Europe. What characteristic of the region's housing patterns is visible in the photo?*



## Connecting to

## ECONOMICS



*Trading on the Russian stock market*

### The Russian Stock Market

Stock markets allow businesses to grow by using other people's money. In turn, when investors buy shares in businesses they get the chance to make a profit. The New York Stock Exchange began operating in 1792. In contrast, Russia's stock market organized in 1994. For the first time, Russian citizens could buy shares in businesses that had previously been run by the government. More than 70 percent of the Russian economy was in private hands by 1995. By 1997 investment in Russian stocks by both banks and individuals was booming. However, a year later overestimation of businesses' worth, scandals, and swindles caused stock prices to fall. Many investors' profits were wiped out. Buying stock on the Russian exchange is still risky. Most stocks are cheap, but buyers can easily lose their money. On the other hand, those willing to do their homework and take risks can reap big rewards.

### Making Generalizations and Predictions

How would building a stable stock market contribute to Russia's efforts to build a strong market economy?



**Belarus and Minsk** Belarus has few mineral resources and generally poor soil. As a result, the country has relied on its educated labor force to build its economy. The remaining forests support wood products industries. Peat is still used as a fuel, even though burning it causes air pollution. Minsk, the capital, has many of the country's industries. Its outdated motor vehicle and consumer-goods plants are left over from the Soviet era.

✓ **READING CHECK:** **Places and Regions** What economic advantages do some of these areas have?

## Issues and Challenges

Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine face serious challenges as they move from command to market economies and democracy. Holding free elections was an early and fairly easy step. Much harder is creating the social and economic structures that support peace and prosperity.

**Political and Economic Challenges** Tension between supporters and opponents of reform and among ethnic groups has grown. Unemployment and crime have increased. The gap between rich and poor is also growing. Public health care has declined. Many older, unemployed, and ill people find that the safety net the old Soviet government provided is gone. Still, Russians have experienced relatively peaceful changes in government after free elections.

Placing business in private hands has had mixed results. A few people have become rich, but some did so through unfair means. Many of the newly rich do not pay their taxes. Some have turned to crime to protect their wealth and power. In addition, members of the new middle class do not feel secure. Many of them fear that the government may again take over homes and businesses.

Many economists argue that several features of the region's economies need reform. For example, factories and transportation systems need to be repaired and modernized. Corrupt officials and managers should be replaced. Also, more businesses must switch to making better goods that people around the world really want to buy. Rules that limit movement of people, money, and goods should be changed. Courts that should be able to force payment of debts, but cannot, need to be strengthened.

**Geographical Challenges** The Soviet Union was committed to developing local economies in remote places. This policy is less important today. People are moving from their homes in Siberia and other distant areas back to the European heartland. Some observers fear that whole industrial and mining districts will be emptied.

The Soviet history of environmental pollution created another serious challenge. In its rush to make the country an economic power, the Soviet

### INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

*Homeless poor people have created this tent city near Red Square in Moscow.*

*How might this woman's views on Russia's market economy compare to the opinions of a trader on Russia's stock market?*





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**Graphical Challenges** The Union was committed to de- ng local economies in remote This policy is less important People are moving from their in Siberia and other distant areas o the European heartland. Some vers fear that whole industrial ining districts will be emptied. ne Soviet history of environmen- llution created another serious nge. In its rush to make the coun- n economic power, the Soviet



*Smelters in the Murmansk region have contributed to high pollution. Reports, acid rain has killed trees in a 12 mile (20 km) radius of the town pictured.*

government paid little attention to environmental issues. As a result, huge areas are ruined by pollution. Today the region's governments have little money to repair damage or require environmental safeguards. Therefore, these problems will remain for some time.

Perhaps the worst example of environmental damage in the former Soviet Union is in Ukraine. In 1986 a disastrous accident happened at the nuclear power plant at Chernobyl, north of Kiev. The Soviet government tried to cover up the story but failed. Radiation from explosions and fires contaminated millions of acres of forest and farmland. It spread as far away as Sweden and France. People cannot return to the immediate area for many years to come.

Finding solutions to these environmental problems and other challenges will be difficult. However, they are not impossible to overcome. The future of the countries that once belonged to the Soviet Union is not necessarily a prisoner to the past.

✓ **READING CHECK:** **Human Systems** What political, economic, social, and environmental challenges do people in the region face today?

## Section 3 Review

**Define** light industry, heavy industry, smelters

**Working with Sketch Maps** On the map you created in Section 2, label Vladivostok, Khabarovsk, Kuril Islands, Donets Basin, and Chernobyl. Circle the area at the center of a dispute with Japan.

**Reading for the Main Idea**

1. **Human Systems** What basic change in emphasis is occurring in Russian industry?

2. **Human Systems** Why might Ukraine attract new investment?

**Critical Thinking**

3. **Identifying Cause and Effect** How did Soviet economic policies affect the region's environment? What are some examples?
4. **Drawing Inferences and Conclusions** Why might Russia's unstable political system delay economic progress?

**Homework Practice Online**  
Keyword: SW3 HP

**Organizing What You Know**

5. Copy the graphic organizer to identify factors that have influenced the subregion's economic development. What started for you.

Moscow Region	
St. Petersburg Region	go
Volga and Urals Region	
Siberia	
Russian Far East	
Ukraine and Kiev	
Belarus and Minsk	

**Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus**